

Translation and Validation of the Portuguese Version of the Surprise Question

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Dear Editor:

The need to identify patients with palliative care needs has resulted in the development of several tools.¹ The surprise question (SQ) *Would you be surprised if this patient died in the next year?*² has been tested in several contexts for this purpose throughout the years, leading to a fairly consistent identification of populations suffering from advanced and life-limiting illnesses, such as cancer,² chronic kidney diseases,³ among others.⁴

Portugal is undergoing a reform and expansion of its national palliative care network, and the need to use simple and effective instruments like the SQ is increasing, both clinically and in the research field. To date, no Portuguese SQ version was available. For these reasons, we conducted a methodological study with the aim of performing the translation and validation of the Portuguese version of the SQ.

We began by doing the forward linguistic translation into European Portuguese by two translators (one nonclinician and the other clinician), native in Portuguese and fluent in English. Both translators were *naïve* for the concepts under study. Differences between the two translations were detected on words such as “surprise,” “patient,” “died,” and “next year.” After agreement upon the best synonyms to use (P.S. and M.J.), a consensus version was created: *Ficaria surpreendido se este doente morresse durante o próximo ano?* To further strengthen the process, a blind back translation was made by an external bilingual translator and 100% agreement was obtained on the semantic analysis. The consensus version was sent to experts committee review (two doctors, one nurse, and one psychologist with primary care and palliative medicine advanced training) to assess face validity on conceptual, semantic, experiential, and content equivalence. After discussion, no changes were made and all the committee members robustly agreed on the final Portu-

guese SQ version as follows: *Ficaria surpreendido se este doente morresse durante o próximo ano?*

After the translation and validation of the Portuguese SQ version, a new tool is now available to assess Portuguese patients eligible for palliative care. Future studies using the Portuguese SQ version can now take place with clinicians and patients, assessing its applicability and acceptability.

References

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